

P. 13m

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A DEFENCE

OF THE

MISSIONARY ORGANIZATIONS

OF THE

LIBRARY

BAPTIST DENOMINATION.

BEING A REVIEW OF A PAMPHLET ENTITLED

"THOUGHTS ON THE MISSIONARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE
BAPTIST DENOMINATION, BY FRANCIS WAYLAND."

BOSTON:

JOHN M HEWES, 81 CORNHILL

1859.

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1796-1865



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GEO. C. RAND & AVERY, PRINTERS, 3 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

A D E F E N C E
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THIS review is necessarily anonymous. Few men have a reputation which would justify them in opposing Dr. Wayland's views on that ground, or that would screen them from apparent ostentation in so doing. The author believes his positions sound, and asks for them only the consideration to which they are entitled on that account.

I heard with pleasure, in common with many others, that Dr. Wayland would publish his views upon the question of our benevolent organizations. I knew he sympathized, generally, with the movement against them, and supposed that he, if any man, could show cause for it. Very well, I said, let us have the worst of it; then we shall be prepared either to give them up or to defend them. I read and re-read the pamphlet, but my convictions in favor of the societies were confirmed. It is only true that they

are imperfect, which is equally true of all human institutions. Dr. Wayland's substitute, if, indeed, he means seriously to put it forth as such, namely, "Baptist Associations," is liable to the same objections.

One fact, already obvious everywhere in the opposition to the societies, is rendered still more so by the pamphlet, namely, that there is no harmony between their opponents. "Confusion worse confounded" was the strongest feeling I had after comparing the ideas of the pamphlet with those of the press for the last few months. Dr. Wayland does not advocate "consolidation," at all events; and his pamphlet is as much opposed to the popular movement against them, as to the societies themselves. He says:—

"I remark, then, in the first place, that centralizing organizations are certainly not in strict accordance with the principles made known by our Lord."

After referring to the project of "consolidation," he continues:—

"The evils of centralization would, however, seem in this manner to be increased rather than diminished. Can we not find something better adapted to our purpose?"

It would seem that if there were anything feasible in the opposition to the societies, its friends would by this time have attained to some harmony. We have been told of the dangers of centralization, before the pamphlet appeared, and then, by the same parties, we have been advised to greater centralization, by putting our four societies into one or two, instead. We have

been referred to the Methodist and the Presbyterian systems of benevolence as worthy of our imitation, by those who in other connections warn us against their example; and now we name Dr. Wayland's system ignoring all these, and giving us one "better still," namely, the "Baptist Associations." More of this last plan by and by. I only wish, now, to say, that this extreme diversity of views, where there should be some harmony, does not augur well for the cause of the opponents of the societies. As the pamphlet remarks of another matter, it might well remark of this, "we are drifting to the leeward, we hardly know whither." I may be permitted to commend to those concerned, the advice of the editor of the *Western Watchman* on this subject: "We beg to suggest to our friend of the *Examiner* the propriety of taking a lunar observation and of examining its reckoning."

Not only is the pamphlet opposed to consolidation, but it shows that this scheme has been tried; so that its friends have suggested nothing new, and may find in our history how their plan *has* worked. Referring to the old Triennial Convention, it remarks: —

"Soon the attempt was made to render the Convention the agent for all our benevolent operations. Home Missions, a Tract Society, a General Education Society, together with the Columbian College, were consolidated under its management, and in fact one common treasury was to be used for them all. The Board in the mean time had been removed from Philadelphia to Washington, which was henceforth to be the centre of all these great undertakings. The result may easily be imagined. Confidence in the wisdom of the Board was shaken, the means for

carrying on its schemes were withheld, and everything seemed on the verge of destruction. The denomination came to the rescue. These various objects of benevolence were separated from the missionary department," etc.

Permit me here to suggest a plan. The present heaven-provided societies, the result of experience under the guiding hand of divine Providence — excepting the imperfections incident to a fallen state — are just the thing. With a few modifications they will answer the demands of all parties. This plan will not only answer all practical purposes, but save us the mortification of demolishing the work of nearly half of a century, and inaugurating new and doubtful schemes.

We should all rejoice in real progress, but strongly object to change where there is no gain. The extremes to be guarded against by all true conservatives are in these directions. It is on such grounds that I beg to protest against the revolution some are contemplating in our benevolent organization. By great effort and expense we have just elevated them to a useful position, and it is the caprice of children now to destroy them.

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY UNION.

With this society, Dr. Wayland deals more at length, and with greater severity, than with any other. We object entirely to his theory here. The providence of God has as evidently manifested itself in originating and conducting this institution

as in any other way in the history of the world. It seems like casting doubt upon every thing—like demolishing all hopes of any permanency or good in human efforts. Without the most extreme necessity, the position against the Union should not have been taken. That no such necessity exists, we hope to be able to show.

A large portion of the pamphlet is devoted to repeating and detailing our trials in Foreign Mission operations at home and abroad. What object can be gained by this course? Are we not all painfully familiar with the facts, without the necessity of printing the most of a pamphlet upon the subject? It were hardly possible to give greater notoriety to the facts, and it certainly was not desirable.

Not content with repeating present familiar trials, we are carried back through the entire history of our Foreign Missions, and assured that the fathers were no better or wiser than we:

“Nor is this state of things a novelty. It existed under the former Triennial Convention as distinctly as under the present Missionary Union.”

I ask again, What advantage is to be gained by repeating our trials and imperfections, either of the present or the past? To be sure, we are imperfect, morally and intellectually; and we can hardly hope our fathers were otherwise. But the remedy for all this is not in dwelling upon our mistakes, and certainly not in exaggerating them. We commend to all concerned, as a better way, the familiar lines:

“ Arise, let us no more revile or blame each other,
 Blamed enough elsewhere ;
 But strive in offices of love,
 How we may lighten each others’ burden.”

Not only does it seem to me wrong to dwell upon, and repeat, and detail these trials, but that the result to which the pamphlet comes by them is at once unsound, and contrary to the facts :

“ If such be the case ” — the result from these trials to which the pamphlet comes — “ it naturally leads us to inquire whether it be in our power to carry on successfully any general and centralizing organizations. It is of no avail to say that other denominations have done it, and are doing it. This is granted ; but it only shows that their experience differs from ours — where they have succeeded, we have failed. We have failed twice under different organizations ; for steady decrease of efforts for a succession of years may certainly be considered a failure.”

And is it so ? Have we failed “ twice under different organizations ” already ? In other words, have all our Foreign Missionary operations been a failure ? for this is meant by “ twice ” — once under the Triennial Convention, where the work commenced, and was continued for years, and once under the present Missionary Union. We answer, emphatically, *No*, to this query. If wide difference of opinion — if contention, including even a bad spirit — if anything of this kind, claimed by the pamphlet, constitutes a failure, then this world is replete with failures, for everything great and grand has had all

these to contend with. On any such theory Brown University is a failure; the First Baptist church in Providence is a failure; the Warren's Association is a failure. But no, no, no; these conflicts are rather the evidence of success, for all success is attended with them. The devil is by no means conquered, and will still dispute every inch of our progress. What he cannot do abroad, he will do at home. In the idea of an eloquent man, all this conflict may be but the tuning of the numerous instruments of a large orchestra, preparatory to the full burst of harmony. And Mr. Carlyle says:

“Temptations in the wilderness, choices of Hercules, and the like, in succinct or loose forms, are appointed for every man that will assert a soul in him, and be a man. Let Oliver take comfort in his dark sorrows and melancholies. The quantity of sorrow he has, does it not, withal, mean the quantity of sympathy he has, the quantity of faculty and victory he shall yet have? Our sorrow is the inverted image of our nobleness. The depth of our despair measures what capability and height of claim we have to hope. Black smoke as of Tophet, filling all your universe, it can yet, by true heart energy, become flame and brilliancy of heaven—courage!”

In some such direction as this let us look to account for our conflicts, and not pronounce them evidence of failure.

The pamphlet admits that other denominations have succeeded in the use of societies, but claims that in this “their experience differs from ours.” Not very much, either, I answer. We may have had *more* trouble,

but they have all had enough to constitute them failures on any such principle. The American Board of Commissioners, for instance, have had troubles enough to have discouraged men without faith. Debates, differences of opinion, debts, etc., are found all through its history. If we have had more, it is only because we are still freer than they — and we must expect to pay the penalty of freedom. Having no man or men to govern us, we must try and govern ourselves. This leads to debate, and debate to difference of opinion, and this, sad to say, to strife; and in regard to better men than we, these things have before now resulted in “contention so sharp, that they departed asunder, one from the other.” As in their case this sharp contention resulted in the furtherance of the gospel, so it may in ours. At all events, as Paul and Barnabas were not deemed impracticable on account of this “passage at arms,” and as, on account of it, their efforts were not deemed a failure, so we need not take so sombre a view of our similar trials. *Possibly* it were better for us, if our savans had a more controlling influence, and if a word from them could at any time restore peace to the troubled waters; and yet we are not likely to make the experiment. Whilst it remains true that “one is our Master, and all we are brethren,” we must expect to differ; and such things do not prove that our system has failed, but only that it is free as the winds that blow.

I must also beg to dissent from the conclusions of the pamphlet in regard to this “failure,” not only as far as the philosophy of it is concerned, but the facts.

The facts, after all, though they have dark shades, are brilliant with encouragement. And here, singular enough, the pamphlet refutes itself.

“In the foreign field our case is yet more to be deplored.”

Such is the proposition, and proof of it immediately follows, thus :

“God gave us at the beginning missionaries whose praise is in all the churches. We sent them to a most inviting field of labor, and gave them souls for their hire in a great measure. In no portion of the missionary ground has the word of God been attended with a richer blessing. This manifestation of divine grace has continued in Burmah from the close of the war with England to the present day.”

This remark is essentially true of all our missions in Asia, and certainly of the German mission in Europe, and these cover most of our ground. The friends of missions of other denominations harmonize in this view of the eminent success of Baptist Foreign Missions. This success abroad implies success at home. With some, or, if you please, with *much* difference of opinion at home as to measures, we have still been sufficiently harmonious, and generally wise to raise the very large sums of money necessary, and otherwise to conduct the missions to the successful issue which none fail to recognize.

But says the pamphlet—

“We have failed twice under different organizations ; for steady decrease of efforts for a succession of years may certainly be considered a failure.”

By no fair process of reasoning, however, can it be shown that there has been a "steady decrease of efforts for a succession of years." It is rather true that, with ordinary fluctuations, such as are incident to churches in revivals and declensions, to commerce in seasons of prosperity and panic, our missionary course has been onward from the commencement. If the receipts are any criterion, and I suppose by "efforts" particular reference is had to these, then my position is the correct one. Let me here subjoin the receipts for the last fourteen years, which comprise those of the Missionary Union entire. The previous receipts of the Triennial Convention will show a similar fluctuation. There has been no diminution on the whole, but an increase.

1845-46	\$105,736 46	1852-53	\$108,186 55
1846-47	85,093 42	1853-54	114,847 42
1847-48	85,894 42	1854-55	102,164 58
1848-49	88,902 99	1855-56	118,134 81
1849-50	86,853 00	1856-57	98,812 28
1850-51	95,776 35	1857-58	85,850 14
1851-52	98,814 69	1858-59	say 90,000 00

The highest point reached at all was in 1855-6, only four years ago. No one can predict what the next four years may develop. There is no substantial reason why they should not exceed any previous four years of our history, and they are as likely to as anything else.

If it is said that the increase should have been greater than it has, to keep pace with the increase of

the population and prosperity of the country, let it be borne in mind that since we commenced our Foreign Mission work in 1814, there have sprung into being the Publication Society, in 1824; Home Mission Society, in 1832; American and Foreign Bible Society, in 1838; and the Southern Baptist Convention, in 1845. All these societies, to say nothing of numerous others which have sprung up in the necessities of the cause, have made large drafts upon the benevolence of the churches, and still the Foreign Mission has gone steadily onward. Under these circumstances we are justified in exclaiming, "Behold what God hath wrought." They utterly forbid the unworthy doubts of the pamphlet. Beyond all question, the true policy for the denomination is to rally around the Missionary Union; "come to the rescue," as the pamphlet assures us they have done before in circumstances quite as desperate. This will undoubtedly be the result. Probably it were an improvement so to amend the Constitution as to admit of church representation without the interposition of *any* sum of money. This need not interfere with the present system of life membership representation. It were only adding another and harmonious method of representation, and were a suitable and harmless concession to the democratic tendencies incident to us.

Probably the former Secretaries and the "Deputation" made the mistake of attempting an extreme government of the missionaries. In this way they became unpopular. If this was the principal difficulty the evil will gradually pass away with the policy

which created it. The present Secretary is deservedly popular at home and abroad, and has qualities eminently adapted to heal the breach. Give him and his coadjutors time, and we shall see what the result will be. We owe it to all concerned, to make an earnest, honest effort in this direction before we give utterance to another note of discord.

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY.

But a small space in the pamphlet is devoted to this Society. Pages 8th and 11th inclusive contain all that is said directly, and even these are only partly devoted to this topic. It is obvious, however, that the objections brought to this society pretty much cover the ground, and if there is force in them, it hardly has any apology for its existence. I take up these objections in the order in which they occur in the pamphlet.

We have first COLPORTAGE.

“The Publication Society employs itself in colporteur labor, and makes this the strong ground of its solicitations.”

This the pamphlet deems an infringement of the work of the Home Mission Society, and evidence that the societies are “complicated and interfering with each other.” I have been familiar with the Publication Society a long time, and was not aware that it makes colportage “the strong ground of its solicitations.” A very little knowledge of the society is sufficient to show that colportage is but *one* of its objects, and by no means the most important one. It

is also the only Tract Society and the only Sunday School Society of the denomination, and I am unable to discover that they are not made equally "strong grounds of solicitation."

But suppose the charge were true. The Home Mission Society has *no colporteurs*. Long after Home Missions were inaugurated, the idea was conceived of employing good men, who might or might not be clergymen, to visit from house to house and circulate good books, conversing and praying with the people in the mean time. Where these men are ministers it is true they preach and do any thing else it is suitable for a minister to do; but their prime work relates to the circulation of publications and visiting from house to house. By common consent, this kind of work was commenced and conducted by Tract Societies, as our own and the American Society. It is obvious that the circulation of books properly belongs to book making societies. I perceive that the intelligent editor of the *New York Chronicle* takes this view of the necessary relation between book-making and circulating societies. Any practical man, who knows any thing about it, must do the same. It does not follow that the work of the home missionary and the colporteur are the same because they have points of resemblance, for they have more points of difference.

The circulation of books is as incompatible with the work of the regular missionary as with that of the pastor, and is sufficiently so with each to prevent their doing any considerable amount of it. Every inducement has been held out to pastors and mission-

aries to circulate books, by societies and private publishers, but without success. In the providence of God there has been added to the missionary proper, the colporteur, to do what he never did and never can.

Not only is the colporteur different from the missionary proper, but the society to sustain him, supplying him with books to sell and donate, is a very different affair from a Home Mission Society proper, for the reason that books constitute so large an element of it. It is of course true that the Home Mission Society might be made also a colporteur society, but it is only as you may change one society into another and entirely different one. Colportage sprang out of the Publication Society as naturally as a limb from a tree. It commenced the work of colportage in this country in advance of every society,* and has carried it on with great economy and general success, and there is no excuse whatever for claiming its work here as an infringement upon any society.

The Publication Society has offended in another particular :

“The Publication Society has some colporteurs in the North of Europe, the very same work that the Union is carrying on in Germany. It appeals to the public for aid on the ground of its labors in foreign missions.”

If it is meant by this that no parties ought to do anything for the destitute abroad but the Foreign Mission Society, then we must dissent from the conclusion; and we know of no better illustration of the

* See History of the Am. Bap. Pub. Soc., pages 124, 125.

correctness of our dissent than the very fact complained of. It had pleased God to cause a very remarkable awakening in the North of Europe. A learned and excellent clergyman of the Lutheran Church in Sweden, a subject of this awakening, comes to this country, and supplicates his Baptist brethren (for he had become a Baptist by reading a book of the Publication Society) to do something for Sweden, where there was no Baptist mission, or any evangelical mission, excepting a small Methodist one. Is such a Macedonian cry as this to be disregarded? And yet disregarded it apparently must have been but for the Publication Society. The Missionary Union, first of all urged to undertake this mission, was obliged formally to decline it. This it did before the Publication Society was induced to entertain it. We have been repeatedly assured that the Publication Society commenced this work only because it had failed to find friends elsewhere.

And yet there was a peculiar fitness in this work for the Publication Society. In Sweden, preaching out of the established church, (the Lutheran,) was prohibited by law; but the press was free, and colporteurs were at liberty to go with books anywhere. This circumstance shows the work to be eminently a colporteur work. Such it has been from the commencement, and must continue to be for the present. The result has been glorious. In two years' time there has resulted, we are informed, from this Swedish colporteur mission, a Baptist Association, with some fifty churches and three thousand members;

and the expense has been but a tithe of the ordinary expense of sending out and sustaining foreign missionaries proper. To my mind, to object, on any ground, to this marvellous work, is downright ingratitude, and an impeachment of the providence of God.

But what becomes of the pamphlet's doctrine of *individuality* and the *independence* of the churches, if it constitutes an offence, or even a mistake, for any parties who feel it their duty, to undertake a mission abroad outside of the Missionary Union? And especially, with what consistency does the pamphlet object to this mission, whilst it advocates foreign missions, conducted not only by individual churches, but by individual men outside of any society?

Besides all this, the Publication Society is a Foreign as well as Home Society. In its peculiar sphere it ever has worked abroad as well as at home. It has done less work abroad than it ought to have had the means of doing, or than it has been urged by foreign missionaries to do, but has, nevertheless, for many years done something, as its history shows. It has, therefore, only done its appropriate work in Sweden. God grant it a still greater work abroad as well as at home.

As long ago as 1832, when the missionary receipts of the Publication Society were yet *very* small, it had sent "in one year \$245 to Burmah, to aid Mr. Judson in printing and distributing tracts in Burman, besides 55,000 pages of tracts for circulation among the English in that country. A small appropriation had been made to colored brethren in Liberia." At

the same time Mr. Oncken had begun to receive aid from this society, in Germany, of which he writes in the highest terms, urging a continuance and increase of its efforts for "infidel Germany." The facts in this direction quite justify the following paragraph from the history of the society:

"Thus began, in 1832, by the influence of some of our humblest tracts, under the mighty hand of God, the great work of Baptist evangelization in Germany, from which such glorious results are now seen; which has penetrated into Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and even Austria; which has already planted Baptist churches in all the principal cities and capitals of Protestant Europe, revolutionized the opinions of senates and kings on the subject of religious liberty, and stirred up a godly jealousy of active emulation among the best men of the state churches, as is apparent in the organization of the German "Church Diet," and the "Inner Mission."

But the pamphlet doubts —

"Whether we should go into this work (of colportage) at all,"

and assures us —

"That it is by no means certain that it is a very efficient or very economical mode of evangelization."

The very numerous friends and patrons of colportage will be not a little astonished at this novel suggestion. We do not suppose, however, that there is any ground whatever for it. It is hardly possible that after an experience of eighteen years by the Publication Society, (since 1840-1,) and of the American Tract Society for nearly the same time, (to say nothing of

other societies,) that so unanimous a conviction that it is a particularly "efficient," and especially "economical" work, can be a mistaken one. Observe, however, the principal reason on which the doubt is founded:

"A church is the natural light for the region round about it, and if we establish churches of the right sort, we might from their own members raise up laborers in every destitute region."

Whilst colportage is a pioneer work, and does much which is only indirectly establishing churches, sowing the seed and preparing the way, it nevertheless does establish churches directly. We find among the results of the labors of the colporteurs of the Publication Society, as an important item, so many "churches constituted." Here are the results of five years' colporteur work of this society, as taken from the Annual Report:

"The labors and immediate results of the society's colportage for the last five years is as follows: 7,735 weeks' service; 135,766 volumes sold; 13,400 volumes given away; 1,190,000 pages of tracts distributed; 14,140 sermons preached; 8,233 prayer meetings held; 240,000 families visited; 2,849 persons baptized (the baptized being but a small portion of the number converted through their instrumentality); 165 Sunday schools formed; and 74 churches constituted; and all this for an outlay by the society of not over \$41,000."

I presume that most persons will concur in the following remark of the society appended to this result:

"It is doubtful whether our denomination performs, in any way whatever, a more economical mission work than that shown by these figures."

I am unable to say how this number of churches constituted compares with the number of the Home Mission Society, but we are informed by a recent circular of the Publication Society, that its *colporteurs*, "during the last three years have reported over 700 more baptisms than have even the missionaries of our great and good Home Mission Society."

But even on the mistaken supposition that *colporteurs* do not form churches, either directly or indirectly, there seems little force in the doubts of the pamphlet as to their necessity. If churches are all that is necessary, how happens it that there is so much work for *colporteurs* where churches do most abound? A little book, entitled the "Harvest and the Reapers," gives us facts carefully collated from reliable sources, of which some of us were aware before, showing that, taking our whole country together, "not more than one-sixth of the population are regular attendants upon public worship." It also appears, "that even in the four States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont, about one-half of the inhabitants do not attend the sanctuary at all." It is easy to say, in answer to these fearful facts, that the churches are not "of the right sort." What prospect, however, have we that those we may yet establish will be any better? How long will it take to establish churches whose members shall, by their zeal, render unnecessary the labors of *colporteurs*? And what, in the mean time, is to become of the millions in "the streets and

lanes of the cities," and "highways and hedges of the country," unreached by either private church members or home missionaries proper? How can any man say—

"It is a very grave question whether we should go into the work at all?"

Second, besides these objections to the *colporteur* work of the Publication Society, it has two general objections to its PUBLICATION OPERATIONS.

"Have we not publishing houses who would pledge themselves to do all that the society does, without the expense of a dollar to the denomination?"

Possibly we have those who would *assume* this responsibility; but if so, they, I apprehend, would do it with very little appreciation of what they had undertaken, and very little prospect of its accomplishment.

The question here raised is no new one. As far back as I have taken any interest in such matters (more than a quarter of a century), I have seen, from time to time, in the papers, objections to publishing societies on precisely this ground. Some publishers have, from the commencement, objected to societies for such purposes; and, at their instigation, and perhaps without, the ground has been gone over, and the public shown, that private publishers not only can do the work, but can do it better than societies. In the mean time have grown up the American Baptist Society, the Methodist Book Concern, the American Tract Society, the American Sunday School Union, the Presbyterian Board of Publication, more

than one Episcopal Prayer-Book Society, the New England Sunday School Union, the Massachusetts Sunday School Society, &c., all of which goes to show how dull the people are, or else how feeble the arguments against societies. And now, strange to tell, the old objection is revived, and we are asked to go over the ground again.

Here are the grounds on which the pamphlet relies for its position in favor of private publishers in the order in which they occur. First,

“ If a book will be read, it will pay for itself; if it will not be read, there is no object in publishing it.”

The answer to this is, that while no society should or does think of publishing books that will not “be read,” all experience shows, that in order to the progress of truth, not understood and not appreciated, you cannot rely upon *sufficient* sales to compensate the publisher, whose chief object is the profits of his business. It is doing private publishers no injustice to say, that they are engaged in the business with reference to its profits. It is their business, and they should and must make it pay, not only expenses, but a remunerative profit. Publishing societies exist with much less reference to the pecuniary profits of the business, and much more reference to the necessities of the cause they would promote. If any profit accrues to the society, it makes no man rich in this world’s goods, though, as these profits are devoted to the furtherance of the cause, they make many rich in the truth. In these circumstances, societies are under no temp-

tations in the direction of profits, and may, as they should and do, publish with reference to the good of the cause. Occasionally, they issue books that private publishers would be glad to have. But it is obvious that many are necessary, and are being constantly issued, that can only be brought out by benevolent societies. Perhaps they are able works, written by authors who have not yet achieved a reputation; or they may relate to unpopular topics, none the less important for that. The tract enterprise, for instance, is not pecuniarily remunerative, and, consequently, the societies have a monopoly of it. It is notorious with publishers, that there is very little money in suitable Sabbath School books, and the societies, hence, have almost a monopoly of these. Especially is there no money in *denominational* Sabbath School books, and hence the societies have an entire monopoly of them. Sheldon & Co., an excellent Baptist firm in New York, have recently advertised "a Baptist Sunday School library;" but it is only an experiment, which they will be glad to abandon, if there is anything to be learned from the past experience of publishers; and even in regard to their first series of books, they are obliged so to construct it that it has no denominational value, and to advertise it as "suitable for any denomination of Christians." Indeed, I am informed that a majority of the books of their "Baptist library" to be "published under the sanction of a committee of Baptist pastors," are bought in sheets of the Methodist Book Concern, and are the same books, word for word, with Sheldon & Co.'s imprint, and that some of

them cost us more than if bought of the Methodist Book Concern.

An intelligent article in the *New York Examiner*, of Jan. 20, 1859, shows that as far back as books can be traced, beyond the art of printing, particularly religious books, have had to be furnished to a great extent "on the plan of cheap publications, the expense being met by interested men." Often, the *entire* expense is met thus, to enable some parties to freely donate them, and others to purchase them, and to furnish to others still, an inducement in very cheap publications, to buy what they otherwise, in their want of interest, would not.

But even in regard to the very last and most popular books, there is fallacy in the remark—

"If a book will be read, it will pay for itself; if it will not be read, there is no object in publishing it."

Take as an illustration, "The Moral Dignity of the Missionary Enterprise," originally published by Lincoln & Edmands, in pamphlet form, for twenty-five cents, as low as it would be published by a private house now. The Publication Society, the American Tract Society, etc., early put it into their series of tracts. In the Publication Society's series, it has twenty-eight pages, which, at fifteen pages for one cent, makes it cost less than two cents. The circulation of this work by private publishers bears no comparison whatever with that of societies; nor can any one presume, that if the societies had not

existed, private publishers would have done greatly better by it.

But proceeds the pamphlet:

“It may be said that books in this way are sold at a less price. The fact is widely disputed ; but grant it, it is only a delusion. The society cannot manufacture a *book* at a less cost than a publisher. If the book is sold below the cost, then we pay a part of the cost when we purchase the book, and the remainder in a subscription or endowment.”

“The fact is widely disputed,” I remark, only by those who have given little attention to the subject. The price on a single book may be so little less as to attract but slight attention, and at the same time the aggregate gain to the public be very large. Besides, the comparison may have been made in books of a very different character, as it regards the cost of manufacture and extent of sale. In this way conclusions may be reached which are by no means correct. The book for which you pay most may be the cheaper when you take into account all the facts. It is obvious that a society having no rents to pay, no principal or partners to enrich, and whose profits, if any do accrue, are added to their facilities of business, ought to make cheap books, and the facts in the case are ample evidence that they do.

Does it follow, I ask, that because “a society cannot manufacture a book at less cost than a publisher,” that it cannot legitimately sell for less? It can still sell them cheaper to the same extent that it charges less for an item of some importance in the book busi-

ness outside of the manufacture, namely, *the profit which is to enrich the private publisher.*

And then the society has the advantage of the private publisher in the endowment, and its cheapness here is no "delusion," after all. The object of an endowment is, obviously, not chiefly to make cheap books for those who have paid it, else it were, indeed, a remarkable "delusion." No man would be simpleton enough to give five thousand dollars to a society that he might buy one hundred dollars' worth of its books (perhaps all or more than he will ever buy of it), at a low figure. But his five thousand dollars may enable and induce five thousand men, who never gave a penny and never may, through poverty or indifference, to buy cheap books. An endowment is simply a benevolent donation to the cause of cheap publications.

But it is added:

"No society can have as good facilities for circulating books as a good publisher who has his correspondents in every city and town throughout the country."

What is there to prevent a society from having precisely the same thing? Obviously, nothing. And then the society has facilities that no private publisher can have, in its colporteurs, and in the pastors and members of the churches whose society it is, and in whose profits (usefulness) they have an equal interest.

Supposing that private publishers could do all these things as well as societies (which I think it is seen is by no means true), there remains one thing they will

not “undertake,” namely, the gratuitous distributions of societies. They will no more undertake to collect from the benevolent the means of doing this, than to give it themselves. I do not say this to reproach them,—the thing is simply impossible.

As there appears to be some necessity for publication societies, so there is that they be moderately endowed, the only remaining objection that the pamphlet suggests to the Publication Society:

“It has already received pretty large investments, and now asks of us one hundred thousand dollars in addition. This is certainly a very large demand. Now, setting aside this fact which all experience teaches, that no benevolent association should ever hold large endowments, and thus be exempted from the control of the denomination, we may properly ask, Could not this work be done more economically?”

After attempting to show that it can be so done by private publishers, with what success we have seen, it is remarked:

“At any rate, before we go into so expensive an undertaking, all the facts should be collected and a wise and deliberate decision formed, from a careful examination of them *all*. We have no money to throw away, and none to invest in doubtful experiments.”

On what grounds, I beg to ask, is this last sagacious suggestion made? The movement to raise \$100,000 additional capital had its incipency (as its oft-repeated history assures us) with business men of much more than ordinary ability, as long ago as A. D.

1853. The plan first was to raise only \$30,000 additional capital, but at the solicitation of the same class of men in New York and Philadelphia, it was decided to increase the sum to \$100,000, of which not more than \$30,000 should be devoted to a building fund. After contributing largely, at different periods, to the permanent funds already secured, the members of the Board stand pledged to this endowment to the amount of \$30,000, or more than one fourth of the whole sum proposed, one of them giving “\$8,500,” one “\$6,000,” and one “\$5,000.” For several years this movement has been under consideration in the Board of the society and in the society’s annual meetings, and in neither of these places has it met with any opposition. We were recently informed officially that the subscriptions to this fund have reached \$70,000, and are so far advanced that some of the subscribers to it have paid \$10,000 on it, when they were only held on condition that the whole sum was secured. Is it a suitable recognition of either the benevolence or wisdom of the brethren who have done all this, at this late day to suggest that before this “doubtful experiment is made” there should be a “careful examination of the facts, because we have no money to throw away, and none to invest in doubtful experiments.” Does it follow that all that is here advised has not been done, and “that facts have not been collected,” that some men never dreamed of, because they have not been sufficiently interested, to know what others are perfectly familiar with!

Just prior to this movement, when the society had existed as a "necessity of the denomination" for thirty years, the whole amount of its capital, and this locked up in its building, stereotype plates and books, amounted to just \$69,095.50;* and this Dr. Wayland calls "pretty large investments." I cannot imagine how he comes to any such conclusion; it surely is not reached by comparing it with the endowments of Brown University, or any of the endowed publication societies of the land. To say nothing of the American Tract Society, etc., our Congregational friends have invested, in two local denominational societies in Boston, namely, the Congregational Board of Publication and the Massachusetts Sunday School Society, \$87,000. The fact is, that sum was entirely unworthy of our great and growing denomination. But of the proposition to raise \$100,000 it is claimed — "This is certainly a very large demand." Not at all, I answer, if it is compared with other endowments for the same or no more important objects, and particularly if it is compared with the necessities of the denomination and the world.

But suppose it were large, it is no "*demand*" upon any man. If brethren think it is no larger than they can afford, and no larger a sum than they ought to consecrate to this object, and if it promises a tithe of the usefulness they anticipate, who shall object and diminish their prospects of usefulness by unfounded and unnecessary doubts? But we are gravely reminded of the fact:

* See History of the Am. Bap. Pub. Soc., page 243.

“ Which all experience teaches; that no benevolent association should ever hold large endowments and thus be exempted from the control of the denomination.”

I beg to suggest that this does not seem a case of that kind at all. The proposition is not so to endow this institution as to put it into any such dangerous position, but merely to furnish it with working capital, not one dollar of it to be in the nature of an endowment which can in any way make the society dangerous.

Very much has been said, of late, of societies “ exempted from the control of the denomination.” Was there ever a Baptist society of that description? I have looked in vain into our history, “from John the Baptist until now,” for the evidence that we are in any danger in this direction. Certain I am that we have no society at the present time that could live long enough to do any harm, if forsaken by the denomination. The Publication Society, at all events, need not be suspected in this direction.* Any church may send as many delegates to its annual meetings as it pleases; for, besides members made in other ways, “Any person may become a member of this society by paying annually the sum of two dollars or more.” “Auxiliary societies shall be allowed and are requested to send one delegate to this society to represent them, who shall have the privilege of a member.” “A majority of the Board shall be laymen.” “The meetings of the Board of Managers are open to any brethren at all times.”

* See the Society's Constitution.

It is strangely inconsistent in Dr. Wayland to take the view he does of the American Baptist Publication Society, when for years he has been so warmly interested in the American Tract Society, for the former differs from the latter only in that it is a Baptist society. All the arguments of the pamphlet apply with equal force to either society, and, to be consistent, Dr. Wayland should as much object to the one as the other. It is true that he has fallen out with the Tract Society of New York, but it is on account of slavery, and not on any of the grounds upon which he objects to the Publication Society. He appears still in connection with the American Tract Society, Boston, as President of an auxiliary society. Why is not a *Baptist* Publication Society as desirable and unobjectionable as any other?

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY, AND
THE AMERICAN AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

A review of Dr. Wayland's pamphlet requires but little in relation to either of these societies. It is suitable, however, to remark that his results in regard to the Home Mission Society, as compared with other societies, do not appear to be logical. It is not obvious just what he wishes here; nor does there seem any reason for the preference he apparently gives this society.

I must not be understood to object to the good things said of it. I could honestly say much more. But there seems no reason, in Dr. Wayland's theory, for any preference for it over other societies.

“ Our Home Mission Society has done a noble work.”

It is granted; but it is equally true of the other societies. Beyond all question, the Foreign Mission Society has as great claims in this manner as any other.

“ Our regular and established organization for the promotion of this work (Home Missions) is our Home Mission Society.”

This is by no means obvious. The Publication Society is older, and better endowed, and just as much a regular society, and has been eminently useful at home as well as abroad.

“ The Home Mission has stood the test of time better by far than any of our organizations.”

We look in vain in the pamphlet and elsewhere for any evidence of this proposition. Two of the societies are older—the Foreign Missionary Society by eighteen years, and the Publication Society by eight years, and they still survive. The latter of them is now more prosperous than ever before. As far as difficulties, misunderstandings, differences of opinion, are concerned, the Home Mission Society has enjoyed no exemption, to say the least, which gives it any preference over others.

“ Here (in Home Missions) we seem to need some central arrangement that shall be a medium of intercourse between the parties. We need some office to which our brethren in the new states can apply for aid, to which can be sent the contributions of the churches, and from which also brethren desiring to

settle in the West may seek for information. Something of this kind in our present condition may be indispensable. We may need some man or men who shall be always familiar with the ever-changing character of the West, so as to disburse our aid to the best advantage, and only where it is needed."

Here we have a concession of all we claim, and a refutation of most of the pamphlet. Pray what is our Home Mission Society but this? It needs no "radical reformer" to be just what it is here conceded we must have. But the most remarkable part of this position is, that we only need this for Home Missions. Why not just as much — aye, why not more for Foreign Missions? Can any one tell? It were easy to show that if *Home* Missions need this, *Foreign* Missions do as much more, as they are farther away, and attended, in numerous ways, with more difficulty.

We come now to Dr. Wayland's substitute for the societies.

What advantages has it over them, even though they have worked as badly as he claims? It should have very decided advantages to justify its substitution, for it involves a large amount of difficulties, seen and unseen, to make so thorough a revolution as it contemplates. It is not proposed to bring all the objection possible to the substitute, but merely to show that it has no advantages over the societies, as far as the imperfections are concerned, which, it is claimed, are incident to them.

Here is the substitute:

“ In reflecting upon this subject, it naturally occurs to us that we possess one form of organization which appears perfectly adapted to our character and principles. It is the ordinary Baptist Association.”

First, the Baptist Association has no advantage over the Baptist Society as to any divine origin or apostolic precedent. Suppose we concede:

“ That there were no missionary boards, and no central organizations in the times of the apostles.”

It is equally true that there were no “ Baptist associations.” If there is any force in the query of the pamphlet:

“ Why should we need such organizations now ? ”

as it relates to the societies, why not as it relates to the associations? If it has pleased the Head of the Church to leave such matters to the churches, and they deem it best to have both societies and associations, why is not one as legitimate as the other?

I am unable to see either how associations are any more “ natural,” even to Baptists, than societies. It is said all regular Baptist churches have, as a rule, associations; so they all have societies. Baptist churches are under no special necessity to join associations any more than societies. They are equally free in regard to each and all such provisions for their happiness and usefulness.

It does not matter which is the oldest provision of Baptists, nor are we able to say. The age of any principle proves nothing which is binding, unless it

furnishes apostolic precedent. And what is an association, after all, but a society?

Suppose the pamphlet's plan carried out, and our societies, so called, abolished, and their work turned over to the different associations. We have only destroyed a small number of societies for a large number; or, if you please, converted the associations into societies, if, indeed, they were not just as much societies before the change.

Consequently the only real question here is, Has a large number of small societies any advantage over a small number of large ones? or, in other words, Have some forty societies, called associations, any advantages for missionary purposes, over four societies, so called, for the same purpose? This would seem to add to the "complication" so much objected to, immeasurably. It would also add to the "expense" in the same way.

One very important point the pamphlet desires to gain is —

"To bring the benefactor and the recipient into the closest possible contact."

We concede the desirableness of this, and are glad that attention is turned to it. It is right that the societies be the servants of the churches, and not the reverse of this. The church is the legitimate missionary organization, and should suffer nothing to override her in this work. Not only should churches feel this responsibility, but individual members. They can

no more merge their responsibility in the church, than the church in the society. Let this position become more and more popular with us, for it is a sound one.

We are, however, unable to see how the Baptist Association is any improvement upon the Baptist Society in this respect, or how any considerable change in the societies is necessary to this object. If we mistake not, the societies are "more sinned against than sinning" in regard to this matter. They were designed to be, and really are, what they only can legitimately be, namely, the church's own provision to aid her in her missionary work; to furnish her facilities of doing what she can best do in this way. They are part and parcel of the church, and so considered by their friends. But unfortunately some parties have come to look upon them in another light, as extraneous to the church. But the societies, in their constitutions, in their history, in their work, take another view of the matter. The Publication Society, for instance, has successfully "labored to bring the benefactor and recipient into the closest possible contact;" and how any organization can do more than it has in this way, I am unable to see. It has, among other similar arrangements, a plan by which any individual or company, by providing the salary of a colporteur, may have one assigned them, or one appointed of their own nomination, with whom they may be in correspondence. They may have his services where they please, and have his reports, detailing his work, his trials and success.

The same is true, to a greater or less extent, of the other societies. The Missionary Union has recently sent out in this way Dr. Binney, who is understood to be not only their missionary, but that of the three brethren who have guaranteed to pay his salary and expenses. There is nothing more desirable than this for those who cannot be missionaries themselves, who of course are the masses everywhere.

But says the pamphlet:

“Now, a central organization is at variance with these principles. It keeps the two parties as far apart as possible, by placing between them a vast number of intermediate agencies. We employ a succession of paid almoners, instead of being almoners ourselves,” &c.

It is an exaggeration of the evil to say, “there is a vast number of intermediate agencies.” But if it were not, the association has no advantage over the society in this respect, or at least, not enough to affect the principle involved; nor can you devise any thing short of sending every person direct to the heathen or the home field, which is of course an impossibility. As far as all this is concerned, the association is a central organization, differing from the national one only in that it is smaller and sectional.

But says the pamphlet, persistently following up this favorite theory:

“If this could be accomplished, we should be at once relieved of all the machinery of boards, committees, secretaries, and agents, inasmuch as every church or cluster of churches would be all this to itself.”

The author does not inform us *how* “every church or cluster of churches would be all this to itself,” and it seems absurd to claim it. The pamphlet goes on to say:

“Some of these duties might be required in the affairs of each individual organization, but the labor would be so light, that probably in every case it would be performed gratuitously.”

But where is the evidence that “the labor would be so light that it would probably in every case be done gratuitously?” Suppose this condition of the new scheme were not realized; suppose the money must be raised by agents — a very probable contingency, for I see nothing in the scheme likely to put an end to selfishness, and I presume our brethren would remain very much such men as they are now; and suppose there should be a large amount of work to be done “in each church or cluster of churches,” requiring all of some brother’s time, who would be under the necessity of being paid for his labor, — and these are by far the most probable things in the case — would one secretary or agent in each of forty associations be any better than forty secretaries or agents in four societies?

But, persists the pamphlet:

“Should a true and earnest missionary spirit be awakened among us, every one would rejoice in an opportunity to serve the cause as far as he was able, without remuneration,” etc.

But suppose this sudden elevation of human nature, or of divine grace in the heart, did not result from this new plan,—then what? If men were angels, then any system of benevolence would answer; though even then, I presume some effort and wisdom would be necessary. But there is not the least probability of any such change as is thus supposed, and hence it is idle to found plans upon it. It is worse than building upon sand — it is building upon nothing.

There is an excellent opportunity *now*, in connection with the present societies, for gratuitous labor for missions. A large amount of it is done by members of Boards, and Treasurers and Recording Secretaries. But it is found necessary to have, besides, Secretaries and Agents devoting all their time to a laborious, thankless task. Somehow, these brethren are generally poor, and must receive from these sources a subsistence. Suppose some of our good brethren who have the means of living without a salary, should take these secretaryships and agencies gratuitously? They certainly would be doing a good work. If they were agents, and obliged to raise the money for missions from church to church, they would probably get more correct ideas of the difficulties in this work.

But the pamphlet not only makes too much of associations as it expects them to become in its new plan, but as they are and ever have been. It claims that:

“ Here (in associations) we have no collisions, for there is nothing to strive about ; ” and that here we are “ always successful.”

These are certainly singular claims. Why should the same persons be less liable to misunderstand each other and fall out by the way in an association than in a society? Obviously only as they have fewer and less difficult questions in the one case than in the other. But in transferring to associations missionary operations, you transfer the questions incident to missions. Still it would be just as true:

“That some of us believe the kingdom of Christ may be most successfully promoted by means of schools,”

and that all other similar questions would come up and lead to the same results. These questions would still have to be settled by “majorities,” and “minorities” would have to submit.

Nor is this difficulty avoided by confining the work to “*individual churches*.” A church may have in it the representatives of all the shades of belief possible to any society. It is no unheard-of thing for churches or associations to have warm, protracted contests, which must be finally settled by the vote of the majority. Carry out the plan of the pamphlet and abolish societies, and confine missionary operations to either associations or churches, and still it will be true as now:

“that while every disciple desires to serve his Master, no one likes to be controlled by his brethren as to the manner in which he shall do it.”

There is no plan of missions which will answer the purpose of men “who do not like to be controlled by

majorities," except the unnatural, impracticable one suggested by the pamphlet in the remark:

"Nay, individual members are able to support missionaries."

To this all must come "who do not like to be controlled by majorities," for if they associate any number of persons with them, there is a chance for difference of opinion which must be settled by vote.

But must it be conceded that there is no bond of union among Baptists:

"That under their conditions it must be difficult, if not impossible, to carry on a centralizing organization of any extent, for any considerable length of time, efficiently?"

If so, then farewell to our grand schemes of the world's conversion by the use of means; for solitary, individual effort, however important its mission, is not adapted to grand enterprises.

In another connection I have shown how we should regard the conflicts among us, of which the pamphlet makes so much, and so much more than the facts call for. Our entire history in the past shows, as it will show in the future, that we are not the impracticable people of the pamphlet.

Not only are the claims set up for associations over societies singular in the particulars just noticed, but in the claim that they are "*always successful*." We are all familiar with the "success" of "associations" in promoting missions within their own limits. How

often has the Home Mission Society been informed by the vote of some association that it must not extend its operations into their field, as they design to provide for it and can do no more. By the notorious facts of this kind we are not left to conjecture how "successful" associations would be in carrying on Foreign Missions. Take, as an illustration, the Warren Association in Rhode Island, to which the author of the pamphlet belongs, and it is more than a fair representation of similar bodies throughout the land. It has done something for Rhode Island, but has it done what it ought, or what some of its members have desired, or what holds out any considerable promise that it would do much for the heathen if left to itself? Has it had no difficulties in doing what it has done for Rhode Island, so that it may, safely to the cause, cut loose from the denomination, and not only undertake to provide for its own territory, but for missions in the West and in heathen lands? With as excellent associations to provide for it as the Warren and the Providence, and as long as it has enjoyed the care of the former of these, Rhode Island is to-day in sad need of the sympathy of some Home Mission Society. The same is true of every State in the Union, not excepting even Massachusetts.

But, according to the pamphlet, we do not need even associations to support missionaries:

"Many of our wealthy churches might support a single mission; others, and there are hundreds of them — nay, individual members, who are able to support a single missionary."

All of this is undoubtedly true ; but does it follow that it would be safe, on account of this fact, to “ abandon all centralizing organizations ? ” If churches and individuals are able to support single missions without a missionary society, so they are with one. There is nothing to prevent any church or individual from doing this now through the Missionary Union, and much in its existence to aid and induce them. The number of churches, and particularly individuals, who contribute enough to sustain a single missionary, with all the inducements held out by the Missionary Union, is very small. Take away the Union, and you greatly increase the expense to the church or individual, and augment the difficulties, in ways too numerous and obvious to mention, beyond measure. It is a notorious fact, that a great majority of the churches do not provide a comfortable support for their own pastor ; and that many of those that do, raise the money with great difficulty. As a matter of fact, the state of things at home is sad to the last degree, as it regards the support of pastors ; and now to suppose that on account of the ability of churches and individuals to sustain missionaries, we may safely turn this whole work over to them, is simply ridiculous.

Who would go on a mission to the heathen to be dependent upon one church of a thousand for his support, or upon *any one* individual ? If a missionary has the means of living himself, or if he has sufficient faith to go forth unprovided for, it is very well for him to go independently of all men ; but if he is like ordinary

missionaries, he will demand some certain support before he starts. To any church, or individual, proposing to sustain him, he will be likely to say: Are you aware of what is involved in the support of a missionary to the heathen? The salary is a small thing comparatively. The outfit, the expense of getting to the field, of returning from time to time, the providing for the children and widow in case of death, the difficulty and expense of remittances, etc., are difficulties in comparison with which the salary is as nothing. The support is sufficiently precarious when it is pledged by a society having credit abroad to secure exchanges, and a denomination at home pledged to its support, and officers to see to its funds. The pastorate and membership of the church are ever changing. Individuals are rich to-day, and poor to-morrow; are members to-day, and excluded to-morrow; are alive to-day, and dead to-morrow.

The arrangement under which Dr. Binney has lately gone abroad would seem to be all which is necessary to any church or individual, and as little security as any missionary should be asked to accept. Three brethren in Philadelphia have assumed the responsibility of his support (I am told) through the Missionary Union. It would be much more difficult for them to do this good work without the Union; and Mr. Binney has now the Union to look to in case of any disaster to them.

THE AGENCIES OF BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES.

I have purposely reserved this topic, several times

incidentally introduced into Dr. Wayland's pamphlet, for a separate consideration, because of its prime importance. The following remark of the pamphlet is as good a text as any other :

“ As the interest in them all (the societies) declines, more agents become necessary. Thus the less there is to be collected, the greater the expense of collection ; until at present, if unrefuted statements are to be believed, the amount which we pay for agencies has become too great to be tolerated, and must be diminished, or we shall soon come to a standstill altogether.”

If there is any foundation for this extremely unfavorable view, it is incredible that the managers of the societies, and the agents themselves, should persist in their course. But, I beg to ask, who are the managers and the agents, that they should be charged with either the stupidity of not understanding, or the wickedness of persisting in such a procedure as is here described ? Knowing some of these brethren, I have looked with suspicion upon the charges of this description, and suppose the following considerations a refutation of them.

First, the history of the missionary spirit among us is evidence that, so far from its being true that the “ decline of interest in the societies ” increases the agents, they have been essential to it from the commencement.

The pamphlet refers to the successful labors of “ Mr. Rice, the general agent.” The men are still living who remember in what apathy the denomina-

tion was found, clergy and laity, in regard to missions, by the providence of God, when Judson and Rice were converted to our sentiments, and the latter came home to perform the first agency work of this kind among us. From that time to the present, the annals of our foreign mission operations are replete with evidence of the absolute necessity of agents to their success. When there were no other societies, and no other agents, the Foreign Mission cause found most difficulty in carrying on its work, and not as is claimed since the societies became so numerous. The fact is, that agents have increased on precisely opposite grounds to those claimed by the extract I have quoted, namely, as the interest in the societies has increased, and demanded more money.

The annals of all our societies, as well as the Foreign Mission, are replete with evidence that agents have been materially connected with their origin as well as progress. As Rice and Bennett are well known names as agents for Foreign Missions, so we have Going, and Crawford, and Peck, as agents for Home Missions.

One would suppose, as he listens to the objections to agencies, that they are some new scheme, foisted upon the denomination, when the fact is, that they have been, from the commencement, an absolute necessity of the cause, an integral part, indeed, of it. It is difficult to conceive of greater injustice than that implied in the attacks upon agencies; and those who are responsible for it should look into the history of them.

The denomination meet in Convention, and decide on certain measures for different missionary purposes. They choose a board of managers to carry out their plans, and adjourn; missionaries are sent out; money is demanded to pay the expenses; the denomination is appealed to through the press; circulars are sent to the pastors and leading brethren; the money does not come. The managers, who do their work gratuitously, have given more than any other class of men, and have loaned their credit to borrow money to pay the missionaries, all of which they make known, but still the money does not come. What shall they do? There is but one thing they can do, and it has always been a last resort. They get the best brethren to be had, on the best terms possible, to canvass the churches. This brings the money, when nothing else will; and this is the simple history of all our agencies.

What if it were true that agents are not really necessary; that they are expensive; that it is annoying to have so many of them circulating among the churches? If they have been indispensable in our case—if the greatest possible economy has been used in procuring them—and if they make as little trouble as possible in performing their work, it is all that can be asked; and all this is eminently true, as any page of our history is evidence. Similar objections to agencies have been made from the commencement. In the annual meetings of the societies, and in the monthly meetings of the managers, this subject has been discussed, and the whole ground

gone over in every possible phase of it, in every case to be decided unanimously in favor of the agencies, and an increase, rather than a diminution, of them, as, with all its evils, the only alternative. The managers of our societies, who have the money to raise, and who know, as no others can, what is necessary, have been from the commencement, and are now, unanimous in favor of the agency system, as the only way of raising the necessary funds.

The same is true of all denominations until quite recently. To do without agents is, with any society, a new and untried theory, and time only can prove how it will work in any case. An experiment of a few months, like that of the American Sunday School Union, is no evidence of "success." It would be singular, indeed, if so popular an institution, and one that has from the commencement had so many agents, has not thus received momentum enough to go on fairly for a time without them. A few years at least are necessary to fairly test the question; and before they transpire, if any thing is to be learned from experience in either sacred or secular affairs, we shall be informed, that for its benevolent purposes, the American Sunday School Union has been obliged to return to the agency system.

I am aware that it is claimed that both the Presbyterian and the Methodist denominations are evidence that missions may be successfully conducted without agents. But what are the facts? Neither of them has dispensed with special agents, so called, for a sufficient length of time to fairly test the question in

their cases. But besides, and more important than this, they still have agents, only by a different name. The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, with but a comparatively small number of wealthy churches to influence, in a small geographical field, with authoritative Synods and Presbyteries, still has three Corresponding Secretaries, who are, to all intents and purposes, special agents. The Methodists, with a "discipline" of unbounded influence, providing for the missionary institutions of the denomination, has, besides, seven bishops and some four hundred presiding elders, all of whom are general superintendents of all the affairs of the denomination. What they can need of other agents does not appear. We could well dispense with special agents, if we had all this force of general superintendents.

The societies that most fairly compare with ours are those of the Congregational Church; and they have the advantage of us, in that they have more wealth in a smaller geographical circle; both of which circumstances diminish the necessity and expense of agencies. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has never hesitated about the absolute necessity of agents. They now style their agents "District Secretaries," and one has only to examine their report to be aware how thoroughly they canvass their field. The author of this review has several times conversed with the senior Secretary of the American Board, Rev. Dr. Anderson, on this subject, who assured him that in their case, special agents are, and ever have been, indispensable.

With such a history as the agencies of benevolent societies have, it seems idle to complain of them, ruinous to undermine them by injurious statements, and unjust and ungenerous to reflect either upon the managers who appoint them, or the agents themselves. The agents, at all events, deserve a better recompense than censure. No class of men have done so much disagreeable work for missions for so small a consideration. Let us not forget the adage, "Speak well of the bridge that has carried you safely over."

Second, there are other considerations adapted to reconcile us to what experience shows is in our case a necessity.

1. We have *apostolic precedent for agents for benevolent purposes*. If this is true, we surely need not be astonished at our dependence upon them, or expect to be able to do without them. Money was needed for the purposes of the church in its early history, and brethren were sent to solicit it. This is substantially the agency system of the present day. We have in 1 Cor., 9 — not to name other passages — as obvious a recognition of this system as is necessary, and in this case agents are sent to a very liberal church. See particularly the third and fifth verses :

"Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf, that, as I said, ye may be ready."

"Therefore, I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty and not of covetousness."

If it is said that these were not paid agents, I answer that this is no truer of the "brethren sent" in this case than of the apostle who sent them. Hence, whether it is true or not that they were not paid for their services, it is of no more force in the one case than in the other. Unpaid agents of apostolic times are as good a precedent for paid ones of our times as unpaid pastors. We presume both were paid; but it is not necessary to argue this point, for whatever the fact is, it is of the same force in both cases.

2. *Agents are evangelists.* In becoming agents they do not cease to be Christian ministers. Those who are suitable for agents, do sufficient besides their special work to justify no inconsiderable part of their expense. If the church to which they belong have not mistaken their Christian character; if the council of ordination was not deceived in their call to the ministry; if their numerous acquaintances do not entirely overvalue them, then they are "doing the work of an evangelist," in addition to their special agency. Indeed, is it not probable that their more important and prior office, namely, that of Christian ministers, is worth more to the cause than their special agency? To be sure, they are thrown in contact with churches that do not particularly need them, but so they are with many more in very different circumstances. The witnesses of their ministry are all over the land, in grateful pastors, mature Christians, and young converts. Just how important travelling ministers are, in the general plan of the world's conversion, it is not necessary to show, when it is true, that the Master as

much "gave some evangelists" "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," "as some apostles, and some prophets, and some pastors and teachers."

3. *If special agents are expensive, and if there are many other inconveniences attaching to them in religious matters, it is no new thing under the sun. You look in vain for any secular enterprise, as well as sacred, where you do not discover precisely the same thing.* The law of special agency is universal, and everything proceeds on this law, regardless of any necessary cost or annoyance. Clerks and police and constables and teachers and rulers, etc., cost money, and are often annoying, especially to evil doers. Undoubtedly agencies for benevolent societies must come under the same general laws. If every person would do as well as he knows how, and hence might do and ought, it would be a great saving in numerous ways; but alas, men are not angels, and we have not yet fallen upon millennial days, as it respects any enterprise. What is not done perfectly, which is always the best way, must be done in the next best way, and we must pay the price of the extra friction.

It is easy to say that churches should be intelligent and benevolent, unsolicited; and that pastors should do the preaching and collecting necessary to all benevolent societies, and that if they would do thus and thus, special agents would be unnecessary. But then what? If they will not do this very reasonable thing, as they never did, and especially as nothing is done in this imperfect world just as it might be and ought to

be, then, in the exercise of all the wisdom and purity we can command, we must do the best we can.

4. *It is obviously unjust to estimate the value of an agent for benevolent objects by the amount of money which passes through his hands.* This is the ordinary way of doing it. But I have already shown that he does enough else to justify a part of the expense, and how large a part no one can tell. The great day may reveal facts in this direction which no one anticipated, and is as likely to in the case of a faithful agent as pastor. Not only so, but besides the money which passes through his hands, he may be opening channels which will flow on forever. The legacies which he may influence may result in a greatly larger sum than all his other receipts. An agent of the Missionary Union once visited a brother who had never given the Board a dollar, and who had no known purpose of any special benevolence in any direction. There is as much evidence as of anything else, that the purpose which afterwards appeared, was formed by the grace of God during and by means of that visit. He gave the agent a five dollar note on parting with him, and an indefinite pledge that ere long the Secretary at Boston should hear from him. In the course of a few months the Magazine acknowledged a very large sum from the brother, which was continued through his life, amounting in all to several thousand dollars.

5. *Whatever necessity there is for agents, the churches and pastors are responsible for, and not the managers of the societies, or the agents themselves.* There has un-

doubtedly grown up in some quarters an unfriendly feeling on this subject, and agents are sometimes personally sufferers on account of it. Nothing is more unjust than this. The churches and pastors are the only parties who can remedy this evil. The societies only ask for the money necessary to perform the work committed to them by the denomination. If the pastor can do the work, why does he not do it? No agent will then trouble him. The visit of an agent is *prima facie* evidence that the work has not been done; for the society has no motive to increase either the odium or expense of sending an agent without absolute necessity.

It is said, in reply, whilst agents are appointed, pastors will avail themselves of them, on the ground, that if the expense is to be incurred, they might as well have the advantage of it as others; and that the true way to test the question of doing without agents, is to cut them off at once. There are several fallacies in this theory. It is not, certainly, a very elevated motive for receiving agents. Besides, it proceeds on the mistaken supposition that there are agents enough to entirely canvass the field. But no society has such a number of agents; and hence, if those who can do the work themselves will do it, the agents may go to those who will not. Consequently all done without agents, is a clear gain to the societies. With all the complaint of the number of agents, a very large number of churches do little or nothing for any object, because the societies have not a sufficient number of agents to reach them. But still more important is

the fact, that this theory asks of the managers and agents what they know, by repeated experiments, to be impossible. We must pay our missionaries, they reply to it. We have tried all methods, and are still trying them, as far as it is safe. You are asking us to do what you alone can do. Give us the means of sustaining our missionaries. and our agents shall not visit you. Until you do this, we have no alternative but to rely mainly upon good agents. We will get the best men on the best possible terms. *We* can do no more.

